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C O N F I D E N T I A L ZAGREB 000396

SIPDIS

CG USAREUR FROM DATT/ARMA
DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/SCE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/1/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KPAO](#) [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [NATO](#) [HR](#) [DEFENSE](#) [REFORM](#)

SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR GEN HAM, CG USAREUR, VISIT TO
CROATIA

Classified By: COL Brendan McAloon, DATT/ARMA, for reasons
1.4 (b) & (d).

¶1. (SBU) Sir, yours is the first USAREUR CG visit to Croatia in several years. CSM Bean visited his Croatian counterpart in February. After you arrive you will be hosted by the Chief of the General Staff, GEN Josip Lucic (Lootz-itch) and the Croatian Army Commander, LTG Mladen Kruljac (KREWL-yatz) at dinner. The following day will begin with a meeting with Ambassador Robert Bradtke and the Country Team. We will then travel to the Croatian Army Headquarters in Karlovac where GEN Lucic and LTG Kruljac will again host you.

¶2. (C) Atmospherics. Your trip comes at a time when the excellent security relationship between Croatia and the United States continues to strengthen. Croatia appreciated the United States being one of earliest countries to ratify Croatia's NATO accession protocol. At the time of LTG Kruljac's appointment as Army Commander over two years ago, there was much in the not-always-reliable Croatian press about his possible ties to underworld figures. Despite significant efforts by the press to uncover evidence, however, no proof ever surfaced. From our interaction with him we have found him to be a willing partner with a positive vision of where he wants the army to go. LTG Kruljac met the CSA in Slavonski Brod in 1996 and the two became reacquainted during Kruljac's visit to the Pentagon in 2007. They met again at last year's AUSA Conference. LTG Kruljac is excited to meet you and is looking forward to showing you Croatia's newly designed assault rifle, pistol, and uniforms. Additionally, LTG Kruljac is very appreciative of USAREUR's contribution of a flag detail of NCOs to two recent ceremonies celebrating Croatia's entry to NATO.

¶3. (C) OMLTs. Prior to NATO accession in April, Croatia had the only non-NATO OMLT in Afghanistan as part of its approximately 300 troops in ISAF. Since NATO membership, Croatia has deployed two more OMLTs: one garrison OMLT and one combined Combat Support OMLT with their state partner, the Minnesota National Guard (MNNG). The OMLTs are deployed with the 209th ANA Corps and are based in Mazar-e-Sharif. Croatia pays all expenses for their OMLTs with the exception of U.S.-provided stratlift. They have no operational limitations on deployment or ROE, but do have two caveats: no CT and no Counter-narcotics operations. The combined MNNG-CRO Combat Support OMLT has not been smooth sailing. Planning shortfalls and poor team-building have hampered its ability to accomplish the mission. We have begun an

extensive lessons learned process to improve the quality of this OMLT,s efforts and ensure that future combined OMLTs are better prepared for deployment. Regardless of the problems, the deployment with U.S. Soldiers is a point of pride for the Croatian Army.

¶4. (C) KFOR: Two new Croatian Air Force MI-171Sh lift helicopters are scheduled to deploy to Camp Bondsteel on 1 July 2009. This will be the first deployment outside of Croatia for the Air Force. Croatia sees this as a test run deployment for the Air Force and has not closed the door on deployment of helicopters in support of ISAF in the future.

¶5. (SBU) Peacekeeping: Croatia prides itself on its transition from a security consumer with UN Peacekeepers on its territory as recently as 1998 to a security provider with Croatian Armed Forces (CAF) elements involved in numerous UN peacekeeping operations around the globe, to include 98 CAF personnel on the UN mission in the Golan Heights. Croatia deployed 15 of its Special Forces soldiers to the UN mission in Chad. With these deployments Croatia is in the process of implementing its plans to increase and sustain its PKO contributions from around 250 soldiers in 2007 to 600 soldiers by 2010.

¶6. (C) ASPA: The U.S. FMF and IMET programs were suspended in July 2003 due to American Serviceman Protection Act (ASPA) sanctions. As a result, in the past few years the CAF depended entirely upon national resources to accomplish its NATO partnership goals and to equip its forces for ISAF. Croatia is the only ISAF partner and new NATO member that accomplished its transformation and financed its ISAF

commitments without FMF or Coalition Support Funding. The suspension of IMET during this time has had a telling impact throughout the CAF. Most notably is the lack of U.S.-educated staff officers at the senior and mid-grade officer level to fill critical billets on the MOD, CAF, and NATO Staffs.

¶7. (SBU) FMF/IMET levels. Croatia did not receive any FMF in FY08, and will receive only one million dollars in FMF and 510K in IMET in 2009. The proposed budget numbers trend better in FYs 10 and 11.

¶8. (C) Procurement Priorities. U.S. FMF funding will be directed at obtaining the necessary NATO-compatible radio equipment, night vision equipment, weapon sights, combat medical equipment, and GPS required to sustain Croatia,s forces in ISAF. Croatia currently has no Type 1 radios or Selective Availability Anti-Spoof Module (SAASM) global positioning systems in its inventory. We will also need to direct FMF funds to the upgrades needed to deploy Croatian helicopters to KFOR. USAREUR assisted Croatia by lending two up-armored HMMWVs for use in pre-deployment drivers training.

We also assisted Croatia in borrowing 30 up-armored HMMWVs in theater and provided 150 IFAKs and trained 20 Combat Lifesavers in an attempt to make the deployed Croatian soldiers more survivable. We have encouraged Croatia to request additional up-armored HMMWV,s for the soldiers in Afghanistan.

BRADTKE